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AUTHOR Berryman, Cynthia L.
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ABSTRACT

The use of exercises and games in teaching the process of public speaking provides a novel and effective approach for teacher and student. This paper justifies a process orientation to public-speaking instruction and offers practical exercises, games, and activities for teaching the major rhetorical aspects involved in the process of public speaking. These aspects include the following: surveying audience values, dealing with a range of audience interests and concerns, examining a speech proposition, presenting unbiased primary-source evidence, incorporating relevant convincing evidence, organizing ideas, creating an attention-getting introduction, arranging ideas according to a specified format, including effective transitions between ideas, outlining ideas in a logical order, realizing the wide range of positions possible on an issue, using emotional appeals for persuasion, inducing an audience to engage in counter-attitudinal advocacy, recognizing forms of communication other than a public speech for persuasive appeals, analyzing language, dramatizing an experience, using sincere facial expressions and gestures, and accepting anxiety and nervousness as common feelings. (JM)

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A PROCESS APPROACH TO PUBLIC SPEAKING: THE USE OF EXERCISES AND GAMES

by

Cynthia L. Berryman

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About the Author

Cynthia L. Berryman
605 Clough Street
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402

Ms. Berryman is a doctoral student and teaching fellow in the School of Speech Communication at Bowling Green State University.

ABSTRACT

The use of exercises and games in teaching the process of public speaking provides a novel and effective approach for teacher and student. This paper justifies a process orientation to public-speaking instruction and offers practical exercises, games, and activities for teaching major rhetorical aspects in the process of public speaking.

CS 501 733

A PROCESS APPROACH TO PUBLIC SPEAKING: THE USE OF EXERCISES AND GAMES

The teaching of public speaking has been a longstanding task of speech educators. A 1954 review of the fundamentals course in college speech curricula indicated that speechmaking was the backbone of the basic course at that time.[1] In 1974, Gibson, Kline, and Gruner report that public speaking continues to be the major emphasis of the basic course.[2] Despite the attractiveness of an interpersonal approach to the basic course, it seems clear that public-speaking instruction will not be directly displaced. Innovative instructional methods such as role-playing, simulations and games, which have gained popularity and credence as a result of the burgeoning interest in interpersonal communication, can be adapted and applied to public-speaking instruction. Incorporation of contemporary with traditional approaches to instruction can diminish the supposed polarity between rhetoric and communication and at the same time provide novel teaching and learning resources for use in the basic-communication classroom.

This author proposes some creative approaches for teaching traditional rhetorical aspects of speechmaking. The purpose of this article is to offer justification and practical suggestions for implementing a process approach to teaching public speaking through the use of exercises and games.

A popular and realisitc approach to the study of communication is one which regards communication as a process.[3] Process is the means by which things go through sequence. Communication events must be viewed as dynamic, on-going, everchanging and continuous, with all ingredients of the process interacting.[4] Traditional methods of teaching and evaluating public speaking weigh input against output and deemphasize the process of message construction. Teachers present lectures and reading material to students concerning the process of speech preparation, yet evaluate that process as it is manifested in the final

product--the speech.

The instructor can use exercises and games as a strategy for teaching the process of public speaking and for making speechmaking a less traumatic experience for students of the introductory course. Research concerning the use of games, simulations, exercises and activities in education indicates many benefits and advantages of these techniques.[5] Tucker, in writing about simulation games in the speech curriculum, finds them to be "as effective a teaching device as any method currently employed."[6] Kline, in discussing the relationship of communication games and theory, concludes that games are often the best, and sometimes the only means to simulate communication as dynamic and interactive.[7]

Exercises and games have recently been introduced into the speech curriculum and the instructor now has available many sources for activities geared especially for the speech-communication classroom.[8] Numerous games and activities exist to illustrate concepts relating to interpersonal and small-group processes, but seldom are these resources adapted to illustrate the process of public speaking. Despite the increasing popularity and effectiveness of gaming in communication, few exercises and games have been devised explicitly for use in public-speaking instruction.[9]

The following is a suggested list of exercises, games, activities, and role-playing situations designed for developing students' skills in the process of public speaking. Although it is realized that all ingredients within the process overlap and interact, the process of creating a speech is divided into separate components for the purpose of providing an orientation for each activity. The components correspond to the classical divisions of rhetoric and include the major factors in creating an appropriate, organized and substantive message and presenting it effectively in a speaker-audience situation. The instructor should choose activities to form an instructional package which suits his or her goals and objectives, time framework, course content, and students' needs.

I. AUDIENCE ANALYSIS-TOPIC SELECTION

1.) Values Survey

Purpose: A speaker should examine the values of his or her audience to determine what speech topics will relate to the audience based on the values of that audience.

Description: Students should survey classmates or other potential audiences to determine most important and least important values of the group. Students should then brainstorm a list of speech topics that are consistent with the values of the audience.

Option: Using the data collected from the values survey, students could also generate a list of speech topics that are in opposition with the values of a particular audience, thereby comparing and contrasting speechmaking techniques to friendly and hostile audiences.

2.) Top Problems[10]

Purpose: A speaker should realize the diversity of viewpoints within a particular audience and develop strategies for dealing with a range of audience interests and concerns.

Description: Students should brainstorm a list of current problems facing the United States and rank order, according to their own viewpoints, the seriousness of the problems. A composite ranking of the group will show the range of divergent views of the class. Students should use the results of this activity in determining appropriate speech topics for classroom use.

Option: Students could ask other groups, such as parents, teachers, or community organizations, to rank the list of problems. Based on the composite rankings of these groups, students could compare and contrast appropriate speech topics for different audiences.

3.) Examining a Speech Proposition

Purpose: A speaker should examine a speech proposition, anticipate opposing

arguments, and incorporate answers to opposing arguments within his or her speech.

Description: The teacher should divide the class into two teams and, using a "spelling bee" format, state propositions of value for persuasive speeches. A member from the first team should respond by either agreeing or disagreeing with the proposition and stating three reasons for the viewpoint. A member of the second team should oppose and state reasons for the opposition of the three original statements. The original member of the first team should answer the opposing arguments to remain in the game. As each member of each team receives an opportunity to be the initial respondent to a proposition of value, he or she should realize that anticipating opposing arguments is a valuable game strategy.

Option: Class members could generate the list of propositions for the opposing team, thereby gaining experience in generating topics and selecting propositions of value.

II. GATHERING INFORMATION-RESEARCH-EVIDENCE

1.) Questioning Evidence

Purpose: A speaker should present unbiased, primary-source evidence in a speech.

Description: The class should be divided into two teams to research the same speech topic. In class, a member of the first team should present one piece of evidence (quotation, statistic, or single argument) and cite the source. A member of the second team should present a counter-argument, opposing quotation or statistic from a different source. Points should be awarded to the team whose piece of evidence goes unchallenged.

Option: Each team could present a source which advocates a certain position. Members of the opposing team could attempt to invalidate the source based on lack of expertise or known bias.

2.) What Evidence[11]

Purpose: A speaker should incorporate relevant convincing evidence in a speech and a listener should critically examine a public speaker's evidence.

Description: In small groups, students should brainstorm a series of contradictory statements concerning a current event. Groups should then exchange statements and state the kinds of evidence needed to convince them that each statement is true.

Option: In small groups, students could create case studies resembling criminal mystery stories. Other groups, in a simulated jury fashion, could examine the cases and state the kinds of evidence needed to convince them of a person's guilt or innocence.

III. OUTLINING-ORGANIZATION

1.) Polarization[12]

Purpose: A speaker should organize ideas into main points and subpoints.

Description: Students should be divided into small groups. Each group should create ten statements about any one topic. These sets of statements then become questionnaires to be administered to other class members. Students should respond to the statements on a 7-point strongly agree to strongly disagree continuum. Students with similar scores on a questionnaire should then meet for the purpose of organizing a group speech. Each group should select one statement from the list and generate main points and subpoints under that statement. From this outline, each group should organize a persuasive extemporaneous speech and select a spokesperson to deliver it to the class.

Option: Students with dissimilar viewpoints on a certain topic could be grouped to create an extemporaneous speech. Comparisons could be made between the homogeneous-group and heterogeneous-group speeches.

2.) Introductions to Speeches[13]

Purpose: A speaker should create an attention-getting introduction suitable

to the topic, occasion, and audience.

Description: Students should form triads. One student in a triad should write three introductions to a speech topic, using a story, a startling statement, and a quotation. The second student of the triad should write introductions to the same speech topic using a rhetorical question, a demonstration, and humor. The final member of the triad should begin the same speech topic in three ways, with a reference to the audience, a personal experience, or a statisitc. The teacher should then state types of audiences and speaking occasions for students to determine which of their introductions is most appropriate.

Option: Students could make a catalog of suggestions for which introductions would be more effective for certain topics, purposes, and audiences.

3.) Monroe Motivated Sequence in Advertisements

Purpose: A speaker should be able to arrange ideas according to a specified organizational format.

Description: Students should analyze a television or radio commercial according to the Monroe Motivated Sequence.

Option: In teams, students could write and deliver original advertisements based on the steps of the Monroe Motivated Sequence.

4.) Practice with Transitions[14]

Purpose: A speaker should include effective transitions between ideas in a speech.

Description: During an impromptu-speaking exercise, the teacher should periodically call out a word relating to the speaker's topic. The student should spontaneously develop a smooth transition into the new idea.

Option: In a small-group setting, one student who begins telling a story could stop in the middle of an idea. The next student should make a smooth transition into the new idea, continue the story, and introduce a new idea. This process should continue until each person has had an opportunity to effectively

incorporate a new idea.

5.) Scrambled Outline[15]

Purpose: A speaker should arrange ideas into a clear logical outline.

Description: Students should be divided into small groups. Each group should receive the same cut-up speech outline. Each group should attempt to reorganize the outline into its original form in the shortest amount of time. Students can then compare the various ways in which the same ideas were organized.

Option: Groups can create outlines which are then scrambled and given to other groups. Teams can then attempt to reorganize the outlines in a relay-race fashion.

IV. PROOF-ARGUMENTATION-REASONING

1.) Spread of Opinion[16]

Purpose: A speaker should realize that a wide range of positions on an issue may be defended.

Description: Students should form groups to identify four or five positions on a given issue, such as conservative, moderate, liberal, or revolutionary positions. Each individual in the group should choose one position, write a defense of that position, and share it with the class.

Option: Students could role-play conservatives, moderates, liberals, or revolutionaries to challenge the written defenses of other students.

2.) Emotional Appeals[17]

Purpose: A speaker may use various kinds of emotional appeals to persuade an audience.

Description: Students should locate and discuss advertisements which illustrate each of the following emotional appeals: emulation, fear, bandwagon, anger, sex, status, friendship, altruism, and pleasure.

Option: In groups, students could create advertisements based on an emotional appeal and other students could attempt to guess the emotional appeal underlying the advertisement.

3.) Counter-Attitudinal Advocacy

Purpose: Inducing an audience to engage in counter-attitudinal advocacy may be an effective persuasive strategy.

Description: The class should be divided into two groups. Each group should survey the other to determine strongly-held beliefs. Each individual within a group should be assigned a topic and asked to write a counter-attitudinal essay on that topic. A discussion of the effects of counter-attitudinal advocacy should follow.

Option: Counter-attitudinal arguments could be generated by teams in a switch-side debate format.

4.) Persuasive Appeals[18]

Purpose: Persuasive appeals occur in many forms of communication other than a public speech.

Description: Students should present to the class songs, poetry, and art with persuasive messages. The class should analyze the effectiveness of the persuasive attempts within these artifacts.

Option: In groups, students could create speeches which incorporate songs, poetry, or art as persuasive appeals.

V. LANGUAGE-WORD CHOICE-STYLE

1.) Analyzing Language

Purpose: A speech should contain an oral style of language.

Description: Each student should tape record a two-minute monolog in which he or she advocates a certain viewpoint. Each student should also write a

one-page essay advocating a certain position. Each communication should be analyzed according to the following criteria: total number of words, total number of sentences, average number of words per sentence, and the total number of words exceeding two syllables. Students should discuss the differences between oral and written style.

Option: One volunteer from the class could generate the oral and written language samples which the entire group could then analyze.

2.) Dramatizing an Experience[19]

Purpose: Vivid words and descriptions hold an audience's attention.

Description: Students should be divided into groups and given a list of sentences. Each group should rewrite the sentences to make them more dramatic or more vivid. Each group should attempt to outdo other groups in the choice of vivid words.

Option: Each group could be given one verb or adjective and asked to brainstorm as many synonyms as possible within a certain time limit. Groups could be awarded points for the longest or most creative list of words.

VI. DELIVERY

1.) Nonverbal Delivery

Purpose: A speaker should use sincere facial expressions and gestures when delivering a speech.

Description: The class should be divided into two teams. Each member of a team should take a turn communicating a message solely through the use of facial expressions and gestures. Team members should attempt to ascertain the message being communicated. Students should then discuss the differences between stereotypical facial and bodily gestures and spontaneous nonverbal communication.

Option: Students could first make emotional statements with no vocal variety, facial expressions, or gestures. Then they could repeat the statements with spontaneous vocal, facial, and gestural emphasis.

2.) Fear of Speaking Survey

Purpose: Anxiety and nervousness are common feelings which can be controlled in public speaking.

Description: As a group, students should brainstorm a list of possible nervous behaviors in speechmaking. Students should then discuss ways of controlling or alleviating such manifestations of speech anxiety.

Option: Each student could take a turn role-playing an extremely nervous speaker while other students coach the role-player in controlling the exaggerated nervous mannerisms.

VI. APPROACHES TO THE ENTIRE PROCESS

1.) Dyadic Persuasion

Purpose: Persuasive speaking occurs in everyday dyadic interaction.

Description: Each individual in a dyad should take an opposing side of an issue and attempt to persuade his or her partner to accept that position. Each person should then rate his or her partner on various dimensions of persuasive speaking such as evidence, organization, argumentation, language, and delivery.

Option: Dyads could role-play before the class common persuasive situations such a student requesting a grade change from an instructor, a friend attempting to borrow money from another friend, or a salesperson attempting to persuade a customer to purchase a certain item.

2.) Jigsaw Speechmaking

Purpose: A speaker should engage in a logical sequence of steps in creating a speech.

Description: The instructor should divide the class into dyads, triads, or small groups based on class size. Each group should choose a topic for a speech and then pass that topic to the next group. That group should write a purpose or central idea for that topic and pass it to the next group. This group, in an out-of-class assignment, should gather information for the topic and purpose

they have received and pass their information to another group. That group should outline a speech based on the topic, purpose, and information they have received. Another group should fill in the skeletal outline with an introduction, orienting material, transitions, summary, and conclusion. The cycle is then complete and the original group which chose the topic should select a member to deliver the speech. Thus, every group completes a different aspect of a different speech.

Option: This exercise could be used as a culminating activity of a public-speaking unit or it could serve as a transition exercise between small-group and public-speaking units. If used for the latter purpose, emphasis should be placed on group interaction as it effects the final product.

3.) Role-Playing Speech[20]

Purpose: Engaging in the process of public speaking is a necessary aspect of many occupational positions.

Description: Each student should choose a certain role in his or her future and then create a message for the appropriate hypothetical audience (teacher to classroom or business executive to a group of management trainees, for example). Each speaker should be prepared for interaction and adaptation by an active audience. The class, as hypothetical target audience, should give appropriate verbal and nonverbal feedback during the speech.

Option: Prior to creating the role-playing speech, students could be encouraged to observe and analyze the public speaking of a professional in their anticipated career.

The process approach to teaching public speaking is a viable, realistic contemporary orientation. The instructor can use exercises and games to give students experience in working with the major components of the speechmaking process. The use of exercises and games in teaching the process of public speaking places emphasis on the creative process of speech preparation without denying the necessity for products of public speaking.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Harry G. Barnes, "Teaching the Fundamentals of Speech at the College Level," Speech Teacher, 3 (1954), 248-251.

[2]James W. Gibson, John A. Kline, and Charles R. Gruner, "A Re-Examination of the First Course in Speech at U.S. Colleges and Universities," Speech Teacher, 23 (1974), 206-214.

[3]Leonard C. Hawes, "Elements of a Model for Communication Processes," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 59 (1973), 11-21.

[4]David Smith, "Communication Research and the Idea of Process," Speech Monographs, 39 (1972), 174-182.

[5]See, for example: Sarane S. Boocock and E.O. Schild, Simulation Games in Learning (beverly Hills, Calif.: SAGE Publications, 1968); Cleo H. Cherryholmes, "Some Current Research on Effectiveness of Educational Simulations: Implications for Alternative Strategies," American Behavioral Scientist, 10 (1966), 4-7; James S. Coleman, "Games as Vehicles for Social Theory," American Behavioral Scientist, 12 (1969), 2-6; William I. Gorden, "Academic Games in the Speech Curriculum," Central States Speech Journal, 20 (1969), 269-279; Michael Inbar and Clarice S. Stoll, Simulation and Gaming in Social Science (New York: The Free Press, 1972); P.J. Tansey, Educational Aspects of Simulation (New York: McGraw Hill, 1971); Raymond K. Tucker, "Computer Simulations and Simulation Games: Their Place in the Speech Curriculum," Speech Teacher, 17 (1968), 128-133; David W. Zuckerman and Robert E. Horn, The Guide to Simulation Games for Education and Training (Cambridge, Mass: Information Resources, Inc., 1970).

[6]Tucker, p. 131.

[7]John A. Kline, "Communication Games: A Plea for Isomorphism with Theory," Western Speech, 36 (1972), 181-186.

[8]See, for example: Kathleen M. Galvin and Cassandra L. Book, Speech Communication: An Interpersonal Approach for Teachers (Skokie, Ill.: National Textbook Company,

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[9]Panel Discussion, "Use of Games, Simulations and Exercises in the Basic Speech Communication Course," Central States Speech Association Convention, Chicago, Illinois, April 1-3, 1976.

[10]J. William Pfeiffer and John E. Jones, A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training (Iowa City, Iowa: University Associates Press, 1969), Vol. I, p. 49.

[11]Krupar, Communication Games, p. 91.

[12]Pfeiffer and Jones, A Handbook of Structured Experiences, Vol. III, pp. 57-61.

[13]Galvin and Book, Person to Person, p. 197.

[14]Hays, Interact, p. 68.

[15]Galvin and Book, Person to Person Teacher's Guide, p. 42.

[16]Sidney B. Simon, Leland W. Howe, and Howard Kirschenbaum, Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students (New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1972), p. 127.

[17]Galvin and Book, Person to Person, pp. 229-232.

[18]Galvin and Book, Person to Person Teacher's Guide, p. 45.

[19]Galvin and Book, Person to Person, p. 194.

[20]Thomas J. Bruneau, "Utilizing Role Playing in the Basic College Speech Course," Speech Teacher, 20 (1971), 53-58.